

The Bisque Token

By JOHN ERIC VIRGINI

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The long sand beach seemed to be deserted—not a single soul in view. Suddenly from the gray timbers of a wrecked vessel's stern rose Dickie Boy's head. Half kneeling in his worn and scanty garments, he rested a hand on the jagged edge of a beam and, craning his neck, looked up and down the beach.

For a second he knelt there, fading the gleaming sea. The sun was in the west, but it was still bright. Well, it was early yet. She usually came a bit nearer sunset time. He hastily divined into one of his pockets and from the tangle that crammed it extracted three marbles, a fishhook and his dearly bought treasure. The salesgirl had wrapped it daintily for him with a narrow white ribbon, and he held it carefully, almost reverently, in both brown little hands.

"Jiminee, I'm glad I've got something to give her before she goes away—something to remember me by."

For a quarter hour more the sun marched toward the western horizon, and then she came. But, alas, she was not alone! A man was with her—not one of her numerous summer admirers, but a man whom Dickie never had seen. He was young and vigorous, but there was something about him that bespoke age—a sternness, even a hardness, as of one who had fought battles.

They passed the corner of the wreck whence Dickie Boy's head had risen just before and went down to the other end of the vessel, where some fallen timbers made a sheltered seat. They were both looking away from the dismantled stern, and through a convenient opening in its joints a pair of blue eyes watched them eagerly. It was not in Dickie's character of youthful traditions to sneak or hide, even less to be an eavesdropper, but somehow a curious shyness had invaded him at sight of the stranger, and he found himself unable to go forward or speak, but of the conversation which reached his ears he understood little or nothing—he was still such a child.

"How plainly we hear the buoy!" said the girl, arranging the border of her blue serge skirt close to her russet shoes. She was intent upon speaking of impersonalities. The man looked out to sea, whence came the fitful tone of disconcerting intervals.

"What's in our direction," he remarked briefly.

"What makes it so sad?" she speculated idly, picking up a pebble and throwing it into the surf. "The irregularity of the sound, do you think?"

"Irregularity is not necessarily sad," the man objected. "I think perhaps it's the aimlessness, the futility of it, dear. A bell ought to call people together, and this one warns them off. Therefore it's lonely. It must ever be lonely. That's why it's sad, little girl."

The bell swung at the mercy of the wind and water. Its sound came to them in the pauses of the surf.

"Keep away, keep away!" chanted the girl, with the same measured intervals. "Yes, I don't know but you're right. It's a rather solemn burden."

While the girl looked silently out to sea he reverently studied her face, with its somewhat pale beauty—the effects of the gold hair under the yachting cap, and that of the chastening indifference of her eyes.

Suddenly he rose and stood before her, his broad shoulders silhouetted against the growing pink of the western sky.

"I'm going away again, Eleanor," he said. "I'm going tonight. I thought when I came back that you might love me. Perhaps you do. I don't know. You don't know yourself. But I've lost my old boyish faith, you see. I distrust you, and you distrust yourself—and so it is hopeless."

He spoke with a bitterness that seemed involuntary. Then for one brief second he stooped and laid his face against the soft hair on her forehead. She could not see the yearning tenderness of his expression, but there was a flush on her cheeks and a light in her eyes.

"You see, Blair," she said slowly, "it's hard for me to know my own mind, I—"

"Yes," he threw in, a little frown on his forehead, "and it wasn't so very different five years ago."

"You mean to reproach me, Blair?" The flush on the girl's face was deeper now, but the light had died out. The note of trouble in her voice melted him. Unconsciously he sat down again on the timbers.

"I mean that I have lost five good years out of my life because you didn't know your own mind, little girl. If you had known—"

He held out her slim hand to stop him. Then his eye fell on a tiny ring on the third finger—a ring with a bit of red stone like a drop of blood. He reached over and took the outstretched hand.

"Poor little ring," he said musingly. "You would not take it, you remember, Eleanor. I'll promise that it should bind you to nothing. It was to be a reminder merely of our friendship. But in these five years all my thought, all my labors, have been for you. I've never been wholly hopeful, but now the last shred of hope is gone. He relinquished her hand gently. "And tomorrow—well, the years that stretch before me seem a bit black and long."

"Blair, I don't think it's kind of you to talk like that," the girl broke in, with a nervous little laugh that was half a sob. "It makes me feel—it makes me feel positively guilty, as if

I had purposely broken your heart. You wouldn't want me to marry you if I hadn't surely made up my mind, would you? And I can't help it—nature deliberately made me a coquette, so there!" She tossed a handful of sand into space. She was angry with herself for the foolish tears that had started.

Then there came a startled little cry of pain. Some of the sand had blown directly into Dickie Boy's blue eyes.

A few moments later, when he had summoned his honest excuses, he laid the ribbon wrapped packet in his lady's lap and would have turned and fled, but his limbs seemed to have lost the power of locomotion.

Eleanor swiftly untied the ribbon while Dickie watched her adoringly. He was not afraid of her, ever, but of the big strange gentleman with the serious eyes.

"Oh, oh, oh!" cried Eleanor. "What a dear, cunning little heart!" She held up a heart-shaped pin tray between her eyes and the light. "And it's a bisque, real bisque. But who sent it, Dickie Boy?"

"I bought it, I did," assured Dickie, swelling with dignity.

"Why, Dickie, Dickie Boy! Wherever in the world did you get so much money?" she said tenderly, drawing him down to her side and pushing back his locks of hair while she looked into his eyes.

"Worked," answered Dickie laconically, displaying his hard, brown little hands, which showed unmistakable signs of a wrestler with a stubborn soil.

"Oh, Dickie, Dickie Boy! And you did all this for me?"

"Do more'n that for you, I would. I'd do anything for you," said he stoutly. "An' I wanted you to have something to remember me by when you was gone."

Involuntarily Eleanor turned to the grave face behind her. Blair had not spoken. He was looking at the cliffs which frowned darkly against the glow of the sunset sky, and it suddenly struck her how deep were the lines that loneliness and pain had carved. Quickly she glanced down again at the adoring small countenance on her arm.

Years before Blair's face had worn that same look of boyish idleness. The remembrance of it touched her now as his manly devotion had failed to do.

"I'll keep the little heart always, Dickie," she said, rising from the sand and stooping to kiss the boy's forehead as she did so.

"An' you won't break it?" inquired Dickie anxiously. Eleanor smiled strangely. The bit of bisque had come to her as a token.

"No, Dickie Boy, I shall never break any more hearts. I think—never any more." Turning to the man, she said gently: "Blair, dear, I'd like to walk up the hill and see the last of the sunset. Will you come?"

The man stopped at sight of the girl's face. There was about it a strange radiance that touched while it uplifted him.

And as the two went up the hill together, Eleanor followed at a respectful distance, turning handsprings.

It came hard.

In France, as in most other countries, it is necessary to give one's age when making a statement in a court of justice as well as in many other official proceedings. But Frenchwomen of mature years are noted above all other women for their unwillingness to state their age.

On one occasion a lady who had to testify was accompanied to the court by a numerous company of her friends, and when the magistrate asked, "How old are you?" there was such a coughing and clearing of throats as of people suffering from severe colds that all that could be heard in the courtroom was "Coughs!"

Through the amiability of the magistrate this more than half-suppressed response was allowed to stand, but the tribunals are not always so lenient. On another occasion a magistrate asked a woman:

"What is your age, madam?"

"Whatever you choose, sir," answered the lady. She was under oath.

"You may put down forty-five years, then," said the magistrate to the clerk. "What is your occupation, madam?"

"Sir," said the witness, "you have made a mistake of ten years in my age."

"Put down fifty-five years, then," said the magistrate. "Your residence?"

"Sir," exclaimed the lady, "my age is thirty-five years, not fifty-five."

"At last we have your statement," said the magistrate, and he proceeded with the examination.

Lafayette and America.

Marie Jean Paul Roch Yves Gilbert Motier, Marquis de Lafayette, was a young French nobleman who, on hearing that America had declared independence of Great Britain, resolved to come over and assist us in the struggle.

He was already an officer in the French army, but obtained leave of absence. On his arrival in Philadelphia, then the seat of government, in the summer of 1777, congress voted him a commission as major general, though he was not yet twenty-one years of age. He rendered distinguished service to the American cause, especially at the battle of Yorktown, for which Washington publicly thanked him the day after Cornwallis' surrender. After his return to his native land he took an important part in the French revolution and the events which followed.

He returned to America in 1824 and was again enthusiastically received in each of the twenty-four states and all the principal cities. Congress voted him \$200,000 and a township of land in consideration of his former services. His own fortune having been confiscated during the reign of terror—St. Louis Republic

DANGER AVERTED.

If a man should cross a deadly snake in his pathway, he would quickly crush it beneath his heel before it could bite him. A poisonous fangs into his flesh. He would not step out of the way and temporize with the dangerous reptile. And yet how many people are there who do temporize.



with a still more deadly enemy—consumption. Like a silent serpent, it glides along almost unnoticed. First a cold, or sore throat, then a slight cough, then catarrh, then bronchitis, then bleeding from the lungs, and finally death. The way to crush out the threatening evil is to fortify the system and purify the blood with Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery. Every weakness and abnormal condition that precedes consumption is cured by this non-alcoholic remedy. At the first sign of derangement of stomach, liver and blood, look out! It is only a question of time until the young man will be attacked through the impure blood, and then the danger will be most deadly.

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NOTICE OF SETTLEMENT.

Notice is hereby given that the accounts of the executor, executor Julia E. Russell, deceased, will be audited and stated by the Surrogate and reported for settlement to the Orphans' Court of the County of Essex, on Saturday, the 20th day of January next.

Dated December 6, THEODORE M. NEVINS, A. H. HARTLINE, Executor.

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ESTATE OF MARY JANE ANDREWS, deceased.

Pursuant to the order of George E. Russell, Surrogate of the County of Essex, this day made, on the application of the undersigned executor of said deceased, notice is hereby given to the creditors of said deceased to exhibit to the executor under oath or affirmation their claims and demands against the estate of said deceased, within nine months from this date, or they will be forever barred from prosecuting or recovering the same against the executor.

CHARLES W. LEAVITT, JR., Executor.

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